

Recovery Act key provisions to increase the maximum government guarantee on Small Business Administration, SBA, loans to 90 percent and to appropriate \$375 million to reduce fees for SBA 7(a) and 504 borrowers. This program proved to be so popular and viable that its funds were expended first in November 2009, then in February 2010, and again in March 2010, following short term extensions.

But regrettably, these provisions have lapsed, and a program that paid tangible dividends, having been credited with increasing loan volumes by a remarkable 90 percent nationwide and 236 percent in Maine, has to my dismay come to a close. At a time when unemployment hovers at near ten percent and consumer confidence hangs in abeyance, nothing could be more counter-intuitive than to allow this to happen. And the numbers speak for themselves. In June alone, the SBA approved only \$647 million in SBA 7(a) guaranteed loans, a 65.9 percent decrease from the \$1.9 billion in 7(a) loans it approved in May.

No wonder in a July 11 New York Times article, SBA Administrator Karen Mills urged Congress to continue these programs, stating that “we’ve been able to put \$30 billion in the hands of small businesses and now is not the time to pull back” Talk about the proverbial snatching defeat from the jaws of victory!

Our amendment would resuscitate this highly effective program, providing \$485 million to reinstate SBA fee reductions and the elevated guarantee on SBA 7(a) loans through the end of 2010. And we pay for it by using unobligated Recovery Act funds. In fact, according to the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board, there are approximately \$50 billion in unobligated stimulus funds, and our amendment, which would cost less than 1 percent—.97 percent to be exact—of the overall amount, is paid for by rescinding, on a pro rated basis, from these funds. While we all must make difficult spending decisions, it should be clear that reinstating these vital provisions represents a commonsense approach to providing capital to small businesses across our Nation.

These are actions we can take right here and right now that complement this bill’s SBA related provisions which increase the maximum limits for SBA 7(a) and 504 loans from \$2 million to \$5 million, raise the maximum microloan limit from \$35,000 to \$50,000, and allow for the refinancing of conventional small business loans through the SBA 504 program.

They will begin providing capital immediately to small businesses, and they have strong industry support from the National Association of Development Companies, which represents 504 lenders and the National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders, which represents 7(a) lenders.

In conclusion, this initiative ought to be a simple way to swiftly provide

assistance to those economic engines that are the lifeblood of our economy—our Nation’s small businesses. It is my hope that this body can accept this amendment quickly, by unanimous consent, so that we can provide our economic catalysts with at least a modicum of capital security, financial stability, and economic certainty.

BOMBINGS IN UGANDA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I join President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and people around the world in condemning the horrific bombings in Uganda last Sunday. These attacks killed scores of innocent people and wounded many others who had peacefully gathered to watch the World Cup final.

I was particularly saddened to learn that Nate Henn, an American who worked as a volunteer with Invisible Children to help children affected by war in Uganda’s northern region, was among those murdered in this cowardly act. I have worked closely with members of the Invisible Children team to bring attention to the atrocities committed by the Lord’s Resistance Army, and I know their passion and dedication. I offer my deepest condolences to the Henn family and the whole Invisible Children family, as well as to all the other victims and their families.

The United States has close ties and a strong working partnership with the people and Government of Uganda, and we stand with them in this difficult moment. I strongly support efforts by the U.S. Government to assist Ugandan authorities to investigate these attacks and bring the perpetrators to justice. And given the news of another attempted attack on Tuesday, we should also help the government take enhanced security measures.

At the same time though, we should encourage the government to avoid any actions that could be seen as broadly targeting Somalis or the Muslim community more generally in Uganda. These communities in Uganda have not been known for violent or extremist activity in the past, and it would be counterproductive to alienate them. They should be allies in seeking to identify and apprehend those individuals behind these heinous attacks.

Al Shebaab, the Somali terrorist group whose leaders have links to al-Qaida, has claimed responsibility for this attack. Al Shebaab has been threatening for months to carry out attacks in Kenya, Uganda, and Burundi, and if their claim is true, this would be the first time that they have carried out a major attack outside Somalia’s borders. It would underscore the threat that this terrorist group poses not only to neighboring countries but throughout Africa and potentially even to the United States.

For years, I have drawn attention to the continuing conflict in Somalia and its direct ramifications for our national security. As I mentioned, al

Shebaab’s leadership has links to al-Qaida and has indicated a desire to work with al-Qaida affiliates worldwide, particularly al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula in Yemen. In addition and perhaps even more disconcerting, al Shebaab has recruited a number of Americans to travel to the region and fight. In October 2008, a Somali-American blew himself up in Somalia as part of a coordinated attack by al Shebaab. The Justice Department has since brought terrorist charges against more than a dozen people for recruiting and raising funds for Americans to fight with al Shebaab.

These developments have not gone unnoticed by our national security leaders, and the Obama administration has rightly put greater focus on Somalia. But our policy toward the country still lacks a strategic, long-term vision, and sufficient resources. The Obama administration is providing some support to the Transitional Federal Government and to the AU peace-keeping force in Mogadishu, but this support has done little to change the fundamental dynamics of the situation. We need to go back to the drawing board and develop a strategy that directly targets the conflicts and conditions that are bolstering al Shebaab and, by extension, al-Qaida. That strategy may entail greater support for the TFG and AMISOM, but we may also need to explore alternative options.

To carry out such a strategy, we need a diplomatic effort equal to the challenges we face in Somalia. We need an increased, strengthened team with the necessary resources, access, and mandate to engage with actors in Somalia and across the wider region. I have called on the President and Secretary of State to appoint a senior envoy to help oversee such a diplomatic effort toward Somalia. Such an envoy could also advance much needed public diplomacy efforts to address the high level of suspicion and resentment with which many Somalis continue to view the United States. And finally, this person could help ensure that we are connecting the dots among all the other countries affected by the Somalia crisis and al Shebaab.

Mr. President, there are no easy or quick solutions to Somalia’s troubles, and attempts by external actors to impose solutions have failed. But as the tragic events in Uganda this week should make clear, the current situation in Somalia is intolerable—for the region and the international community, not to mention the Somali people who continue to suffer one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises. We cannot afford to just continue with our current halfhearted efforts and hope for the best. Working with our regional partners and others in the international community, we need to get serious about a new push for peace and stability in Somalia.

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
SESSION IN OSLO

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I want to report on the activities of a bicameral, bipartisan congressional delegation I had the privilege to lead last week as chairman of the Helsinki Commission. The purpose of the trip was to represent the United States at the 19th Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, otherwise known as the OSCE PA. The annual session this year was held in Oslo, Norway, and the U.S. delegation participated fully in the assembly's standing committee, the plenary sessions, the three general committees and numerous side events that included discussion of integration in multiethnic societies and addressing gender imbalances in society.

Although some last-minute developments at home compelled him to remain behind, our colleague from the other Chamber, Mr. ALCEE HASTINGS of Florida, was present in spirit as the deputy head of the delegation. Mr. HASTINGS, who cochairs the Helsinki Commission, was very active in the preparations for the trip, and his legacy of leadership in the OSCE PA—for over a decade—is tangible in the respect and goodwill afforded the United States during the proceedings.

Our assistant majority leader, Mr. DURBIN of Illinois, joined me on the trip, as he did last year. Our colleague from New Mexico who serves as a fellow Helsinki Commissioner, Mr. UDALL, also participated. Helsinki Commissioners from the other Chamber who were on the delegation include Mr. CHRISTOPHER SMITH of New Jersey, serving as the ranking member of the delegation, as well as Mrs. LOUISE MCINTOSH SLAUGHTER of New York, and Mr. ROBERT ADERHOLT of Alabama. Although not a member of the Helsinki Commission, Mr. LLOYD DOGGETT of Texas has a longstanding interest in OSCE-related issues and also participated on the delegation.

As many of you know, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was created within the framework of the OSCE as an independent, consultative body consisting of over 300 Parliamentarians from virtually every country in Europe, including the Caucasus, as well as from Central Asia, and the United States, and Canada. The annual sessions are held in late June/early July as the chief venue for debating issues of the day and issuing a declaration addressing human rights, democratic development and the rule of law; economic cooperation and environmental protection; and confidence building and security among the participating states and globally.

This active congressional participation helps ensure that matters of interest to the United States are raised and discussed. Robust U.S. engagement has been the hallmark of the Parliamentary Assembly since its inception nearly 20 years ago.

The theme for this year's annual session was "Rule of Law: Combating Transnational Crime and Corruption." In addition to resolutions for each of the three general committees, delegations introduced a total of 35 additional resolutions for consideration, a record number, including 4 by the United States dealing with:

Nuclear security, which followed up directly on the Nuclear Summit here in Washington in April;

The protection of investigative journalists, a critical human rights issue as those who seek to expose corruption are targeted for harassment or worse;

Mediterranean cooperation, building on the OSCE partnerships to engage important countries in North Africa and the Middle East; and

Combating the demand for human trafficking and electronic forms of exploitation, a longstanding Helsinki Commission issue requiring persistence and targeted action.

U.S. drafts on these relevant, important topics received widespread support and were adopted with few if any amendments.

Beyond these resolutions, the United States delegation also undertook initiatives in the form of packages of amendments to other resolutions. These initiatives addressed:

the needs of the people of Afghanistan in light of the smuggling and other criminal activity which takes place there;

the struggle for recovery stability and human rights in Kyrgyzstan, which is an OSCE state in the midst of crisis; and

manifestations of racism and xenophobia that have become particularly prevalent in contemporary Europe.

A critical U.S. amendment allowed us generally to support a French resolution that usefully addressed issues relating to the closure of the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay. Still other amendments coming from specific members of the U.S. Delegation covered a wide range of political, environmental and social issues relevant to policymakers. My colleagues and I were also active in the successful countering of amendments that would have steered resolutions on the Middle East and on the future of the OSCE multilateral diplomatic process in directions contrary to U.S. policy.

Beyond the consideration of the resolutions which now comprise the Oslo Declaration, the annual session also handled some important affairs for the OSCE PA itself. These, too, had relevance for U.S. policy interests:

the American serving as OSCE PA Secretary General, Spencer Oliver, was reappointed to a new 5-year term;

a modest—and for the third fiscal year in a row—frozen OSCE PA budget of about \$3½ million was approved that requires continued and unparalleled efficiency in organizing additional conferences, election observation missions, and various other activities that keep the Parliamentary Assembly

prominently engaged in European and Central Asian affairs;

in addition to my continued tenure as a vice president in the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. ADERHOLT of Alabama was reelected as the vice chair of the general committee dealing with democracy, human rights, and humanitarian questions which ensures strong U.S. representation in OSCE PA decisionmaking; and

a Greek parliamentary leader defeated a prominent Canadian senator in the election of a new OSCE PA president, following a vigorous but friendly campaign that encouraged the assembly to take a fresh look at itself and establish a clearer vision for its future.

While the congressional delegation's work focused heavily on representing the United States at the OSCE PA, we tried to use our presence in Europe to advance U.S. interests and express U.S. concerns more broadly. The meeting took place in Norway, a very close friend and strong, long-time ally of the United States of America. In discussions with Norwegian officials, we expressed our sorrow over the recent deaths of Norwegian soldiers in Afghanistan. We also shared our concerns about climate change and particularly the impact global warming has on polar regions.

Indeed, on our return we made a well received stop on the archipelago of Svalbard, well north of the Arctic Circle, to learn more about the impact firsthand, from changing commercial shipping lanes to relocated fisheries to ecological imbalance that make far northern flora and fauna increasingly vulnerable. The delegation also visited the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, a facility that preserves more than 525,000 types of seeds from all over the world as a safeguard for future crop diversity, and took the opportunity to donate additional U.S. seeds to the collection.

Norway is located close to a newer, but also very strong, ally with close ties to the United States, Estonia. Since last year's delegation to the OSCE PA Annual Session went to Lithuania and included Latvia as a side trip, I believed it was important to utilize the opportunity of returning to northern Europe to visit this Baltic state as well.

While some remained in Oslo to represent the United States, others traveled to Tallinn, where we had meetings with the President, Prime Minister, and other senior government officials, visited the NATO Cooperative Cyber-Defense Center of Excellence and were briefed on electronic networking systems that make parliament and government more transparent, efficient and accessible to the citizen. Estonia has come a long way since it reestablished its independence from the Soviet Union almost 20 years ago, making the visit quite rewarding for those of us on the Helsinki Commission who tried to keep a spotlight on the Baltic States during the dark days of the Cold War.

During the course of the meeting, the U.S. delegation also had bilateral